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ABSTRACT

These activity cards represent a way for teachers to supplement the content of the curriculum with activities that address the concept of conflict. Students become aware of conflicts in their lives and discover individual methods for coping with those conflicts. The cards contain action-oriented activities to enable students to learn through active participation and first-hand experience. Each card presents a conflict concept based on identified objectives of the unit and then provides opportunities for application of the concept to other real life or personal situations. The cards are loosely arranged in ascending order according to the objectives and can be adapted to fit different age groups and students. Objectives include: (1) recognize and identify various kinds of conflict; (2) discover the presence of conflict in every day life; (3) recognize the presence of power, emotion, and violence in conflicts; (4) identify and understand all sides of a conflict; (5) accept responsibility for one's actions in conflict situations; (6) practice negotiation skills; and (7) generate alternative ways of resolving or coping with conflict. (EH)

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CONFLICT ACTIVITY CARDS

GRADES K-5

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CONFLICT ACTIVITY CARDS

These conflict activity cards represent a simple but effective way for the classroom teacher to supplement the content of her/his curriculum with activities that address the concept of conflict. Conflict is present at every level of people's lives and is encountered every day. Using the cards will help students become aware of conflicts in their lives and help them discover individual methods for coping with conflict. The concepts learned and skills acquired can be expanded outside of both the students' personal lives and the classroom, and can be applied to family, community, and world situations.

The cards are action-oriented to enable students to learn through active participation and first-hand experience. Each card is formatted to first present a conflict concept based on the seven objectives listed below ("TRY THIS"), and then to provide further applications of the concept to other real life or personal situations ("MORE"). The cards are loosely arranged in ascending order according to the following objectives, from recognizing and identifying conflicts to generating viable alternatives. Each card can be easily adapted to fit different age groups and most of the objectives below.

The basic objectives of this book are to provide activities which teach students to:

1) Recognize and identify various kinds of conflict;
2) Discover the presence of conflict in every day life;
3) Recognize the presence of power, emotion, violence, etc. in conflicts;
4) Identify and understand all sides of a conflict, including distinguishing between the internal, the interpersonal, the intergroup and the international sides;
5) Accept responsibility for ones actions in conflict situations;
6) Practice negotiating skills; and
7) Generate alternative ways of resolving or coping with conflict.

The conflict cards provide an opportunity for teachers to individualize classroom instruction and learning. They allow for flexibility in curriculum planning and learning pace, as well as freedom in choosing class activities. Although the cards are intended as a supplement to an educator's regular curriculum, they can be used occasionally, as issues of conflict arise naturally in the classroom. or intensively, as a special unit on conflict. The flexibility of these cards makes them applicable to every field of study at any time during the year.

There are many possible ways to utilize these cards. For instance, the cards can be discussed as a class or in small groups, individual students may be assigned specific cards, or students may browse through the cards to choose activities of particular interest to them. Some cards recommend activities outside the classroom, which should be encouraged if possible to help the students internalize a particular concept. There are many ways to learn the concepts on these cards, the activities provided are only suggestions. Students should be allowed and encouraged to expand the activities on the cards in their own creative fashion.

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TRY THIS: How do you know when a conflict is occurring?
How do you know when:

-- your parents are fighting?
-- someone has won a disagreement?
-- someone disagrees with someone else?
-- you have lost an argument?
-- someone has more power or authority than you do?

MORE:

* Keep a record of class conflicts.

* Find out the causes of the particular conflicts.

* Discuss alternative ways to resolve the conflict.

TRY THIS: Read out loud, Trouble at School, by Stan and Jan Berenstein. Identify what Brother Bear's problem was at school. What did he need to do to resolve his problem? Who helped him?

MORE: * What other solutions could Brother Bear have used? Do you agree with Brother Bear's solution? Why or why not?

* Have a group discussion on what to do when you have problems at school. Who can you go to for help or to discuss the problem?

TRY THIS: Lead a class discussion on conflict situations, such as: your neighbor supposedly stole your pencil. What do you do? Make a list of the responses.

MORE: * Choose another problem to discuss in pairs. Share the solutions with the class.

* Bring in speakers (other teachers, principal, community group leader, etc.) and ask them what problems they encounter. How do they solve their problems?

TRY THIS: Make a "story frame" of a book that has a conflict.
Example: <u>The Three Little Pigs</u>

Character:	Problem:	Next Problem:	Outcome:
Wolf	Wants food	Still wants food	Wolf is cooked
	Solution:	Solution:	
	Blows down houses to catch pigs. Pigs go to stronger house.	Climbs down chimney	

MORE: * Have the class write their own story by finishing the following sentences:

1) One day, _____ had a problem.
2) The problem started when .....
3) Later that day .....
4) The problem was solved when .....

TRY THIS: Identify the characteristics of the "ideal" parent, teacher, friend, etc. Why are these good characteristics?

MORE:

* Can anyone have these good characteristics? How do you get them?

* What happens when you must live with someone who is not "ideal"? What types of conflicts arise?

* What happens when you have to work on a project with someone you do not get along with? How can you overcome your differences?

TRY THIS: Read I'm Terrific, by Marjorie Weimman Sharmat. Discuss Jason Bear's problems. How did he feel about himself at the beginning, middle, and end of the story? Discuss how Jason realized he was terrific.

MORE: * Have students cut out stars and write on them reasons why they are terrific.

* Have students identify times when they do not feel terrific. What makes them not feel terrific?

* How can you help someone else feel terrific?

TRY THIS: Find something to do that you cannot do alone. What is it? Who would you ask to help you do it.

MORE: * Get someone to help you do something you can do by yourself. How did you convince them to help? List the reasons people gave if they refused to help.

* Help someone else accomplish a task without their asking you.
Did they need your help? How did helping them make you feel?

* Is it ever wrong to help others? Why or why not?

TRY THIS: List some things you want to do but cannot. Figure out ways you can do these things. Do any of the ways you chose affect other people? How?

MORE: * Make two lists: one of things you think people should not do to get what they want and one of things people should do to get what they want.

* Are there times when you should not do what you want because of how it would affect other people? Describe some examples?

TRY THIS: Read the book The Lemming Condition, by Alan Arkin, in class. Make a chart comparing Bubber's reasoning skills with those of the other lemmings.

MORE: * Talk about instances on the playground, or elsewhere, where children have followed a leader without thinking about why they were doing it. What other ways could they have handled the situation?

* Make posters titled "What is a Brain For?" Discuss how it can help you make good choices.

TRY THIS: Make a list of some of the most powerful people in your life, in school, in the world. How do these people use their power? What conflicts do you have with these people? How do you think these people resolve their conflicts?

MORE:

* What do these people have in common? Are they older, bigger, wiser, etc. than you or most people?

* What are the clues that a person is powerful? Look at dress, language, money, personality, etc.

* Find out if these people think they have as much power as you think they do? How do you know?

TRY THIS: Divide the class into small groups. Have each group interview a teacher and find out what s/he thinks is the most common cause of conflict between teacher and student in the classroom. Ask the teacher to describe how s/he feels when the conflict happens. Find a student who has had a conflict with your teacher and ask the student how s/he felt. Write a report about the interviews.

MORE:

* Read the reports to the teacher and to the student. Do they agree that your report correctly expresses their feelings? Were you a good listener? Why or why not?

* Read the reports to the class. Tally on the board the types of conflict from each of the reports.

TRY THIS: Usually I do not agree with my parents on the issue of _____.
We disagree because _____. I do as my parents ask because _____. I do not always do as my parents ask because _____. My friends and parents disagree on issues about _____. When I go along with my friends instead of my parents, my parents feel _____.

MORE:

* Substitute teachers for parents. Also try substituting other groups or individuals.

* How are these disagreements usually resolved? Are there better ways to resolve them?

* Role play a disagreement with one student acting as the parent/teacher and one acting the student's part. Does playing the role of the parent/teacher change the student's perspective of the conflict?

TRY THIS: Change your mind about something:

-- the week before
-- the day before
-- ten minutes before

Does changing your mind promote conflict? With whom? Over what? How?

MORE: * Change your mind about something but avoid causing problems for others. How did you prevent causing problems for others?

* Make a list of all the people that are affected in some way when you change your mind on a particular issue. How are they affected?

TRY THIS: Read the story of The Three Little Pigs. Discuss the character of the wolf. Read the True Story of the Three Little Pigs. Discuss how they differ. Had you ever thought of the wolf's point of view before?

MORE: * Take the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. Rewrite it from the giant's viewpoint.

* Discuss how the villains justify their actions. Are the villains always wrong?

TRY THIS: Write about the first time you got into a fight. Were you hurt? Was the other person hurt? Was the other person wrong? Were you wrong? Did the fight feel good? How did you feel after the fight? Could the fight have been avoided? How?

MORE:

* List five things about which you would be willing to fight.

* What other ways could you get what you want besides fighting?

* Can fighting ever be beneficial?

TRY THIS: As a class, make a list of situations or words that make people angry.

MORE: * Who was, or is, responsible for the situations that make you angry? You, or someone else?

* Do you ever express anger and no one knows why? How can you express your anger so that others know exactly what it is that is making you angry.

TRY THIS: Talk with a partner about what happens with your body when you get angry. Does your face get red? Do you breathe harder? Does your voice get louder? Do you feel tense?

MORE:

* List times when it is good to get mad. What are your choices of action when you get mad? Discuss skills such as walking away and finding a place to calm down; talking to someone about your anger; writing about how you feel, etc.

* How do adults handle anger? Discuss nonviolent methods the students have seen in everyday life.

* Talk about how each emotion has some important role to play in human relations.

TRY THIS: List as many feelings as you can. Draw a circle beside each feeling and draw a face in each circle to demonstrate the feeling.

MORE:

* Keep a journal of feelings. At the end of the day, put a check mark beside each feeling that you experienced during the day.

* Write about one of the feelings you experienced today. What made the feeling begin? How long did it last? What made it go away?

* Explain to a friend or draw in your journal how you are feeling about a recent problem.

* Write five or six feelings on slips of paper. Mix them into a pile. Taking turns with someone, act out the feeling you draw from the pile.

TRY THIS: What color is conflict? What color is peace? Draw each of them. What emotions are present in your drawings? Explain.

MORE:

* Are different kinds of conflict different colors? Are different solutions different colors? Which colors and why?

* Can looking through "rose-colored glasses" cause conflict?

* What conflicts today are caused by color? (Skin color is an example.) How can these conflicts be resolved?

TRY THIS: Find pictures of the use of force or violence. Does violence settle a conflict? Increase it? Decide when and where violence works and does not work.

MORE:

* If someone wins using violence, does that person also lose something?

* How can you achieve your goals without using violence?

* Discuss how people in history, such as Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr., used nonviolent tactics to resolve conflicts.

TRY THIS: Draw cartoons of name calling, pushing in line, stealing another person's pencil or lunch money, or bothering others in class. Fill in the dialogue and possible solutions. Discuss who is responsible for each action in the cartoon.

MORE:

* Draw a few different solutions to the problem. Which solution do you think works best? Why?

* When you have a problem with others how can you take responsibility for your actions? How do your actions help or hurt the situation?

* Develop a single character (could be a puppet for younger children) who learns how to take responsibility for his/her problems over time, perhaps during the course of the school year.

TRY THIS: Read Leo Lionni's book, Swimming, to the students. Discuss qualities of working together to achieve a goal.

MORE:

* Have students make a mural depicting the actions or qualities of cooperative people.

* Brainstorm ways to cooperate in your class with your classmates. Post them on the board.

* List three ways you could help if someone or something is bothering a classmate.

TRY THIS: As a class, discuss problems that arise on the playground. Make a list of rules to address (or avoid) these problems. Post them in the classroom. Decide as a class on consequences for breaking the rules.

MORE: * Discuss why there is a need for rules. Think about what people's lives would be like if there were no rules.

* Do cities or countries need rules when they deal with each other? Why? What are some of these rules?

TRY THIS: Form groups of 4-6 people. Each person in the group should write about a conflict they were involved in that ended in a fight, either physical or verbal. Have each person describe how the fight was settled. The groups should brainstorm two or three ideas about how the conflict could have been settled without fighting. Brainstorm two or three ways the conflict could have been prevented.

MORE: * Find out what the group thinks are the two biggest causes of fights on the playground (in class, at home, etc.).

* For each playground fight, list three ways the problems could be solved without fighting.

TRY THIS: Divide the class into groups with each group in "control" of unequal portions of the property and space in the classroom. Throughout a normal day see what types of conflicts develop. How are the conflicts resolved?

MORE:

* What happens when ownership of space or objects is in dispute? In what ways can these conflicts be resolved?

* Describe the ways people let others know they own something. Find new ways to let people know you own or control something.

* What are good examples of conflicts caused by a misunderstanding of who owned or controlled something?

* What should you own or control at home? Do your parents agree?

TRY THIS: Divide the class into groups of five. Give each group three M&M's.The M&M's cannot be broken. How will you as a group decide who gets them? Will it be by chance? Will it be a reward for someone who does something? How did the students who did not get M&M's feel?

MORE:

* Think of something with more value. What would be some ways of deciding who would get it?

* Design a treasure hunt. Let the students decide how to divide the treasure among their own groups and among the groups that did not find any treasure.

* Make posters that depict the word "compromise". Examples are children sharing a candy bar, half a loaf of bread is better than none, breaking a piece of chalk in half so that each student gets one piece, etc.

TRY THIS: Read the fairy tale, The Three Little Pigs. Have students write a revised ending to the story that is a WIN-WIN situation rather than a WIN-LOSE situation. Ask, "is there a compromise that the three pigs and wolf could have agreed upon?"

MORE:

* Think of conflicts that happen in the classroom, around school, at home, anywhere. Draw what the winner was like. The loser. Why were they winners or losers?

* Was it necessary for someone to lose and someone to win?

* How do you feel when you win? When you lose?

* Think of a time when it is more important to lose than to win. Think of a time when it is more important to win than to lose.

* How can you alter situations so everyone wins?

TRY THIS: Describe an incident where you received a thank you note or a note of apology. How did it make you feel? Is there something you have done that you feel bad about? Should you write an apology note? Would it help you or the other person?

MORE:

* Should you write an apology note if it is not sincere?

* If the students feel bad about something they did, why did they do the action in the first place? Why do they feel badly now?

* Put a mailbox in the classroom. Ask students to write a note when they see a classmate doing something kind. Share the notes with the class.

TRY THIS: Read the story Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak and describe the conflict between Max and his mother. What was Max's mother's solution to the conflict? Did you feel it was a fair solution? Why or why not?

MORE:

* If you had been Max's mom, what other solutions could you have thought of that would have been fair?

* Describe a conflict you recently had. Did you feel that the solution was fair? Why or why not?

* Give two ideas for fair solutions to the conflict you described.

TRY THIS: Practice being a mediator. Red Riding Hood is angry at the wolf for scaring her grandma. With two people playing these roles act out the problem-solving process they might go through.

MORE:

* Mediate between: Cinderella and her stepmother; Peter Rabbit and Mr. McGregor; Snow White and the wicked queen; the Ugly Duckling and the other ducks; the third little pig and the wolf.

* Two students are having a problem on the playground. What could you do to help?

* Are there times when you should not interfere with someone else's problems?